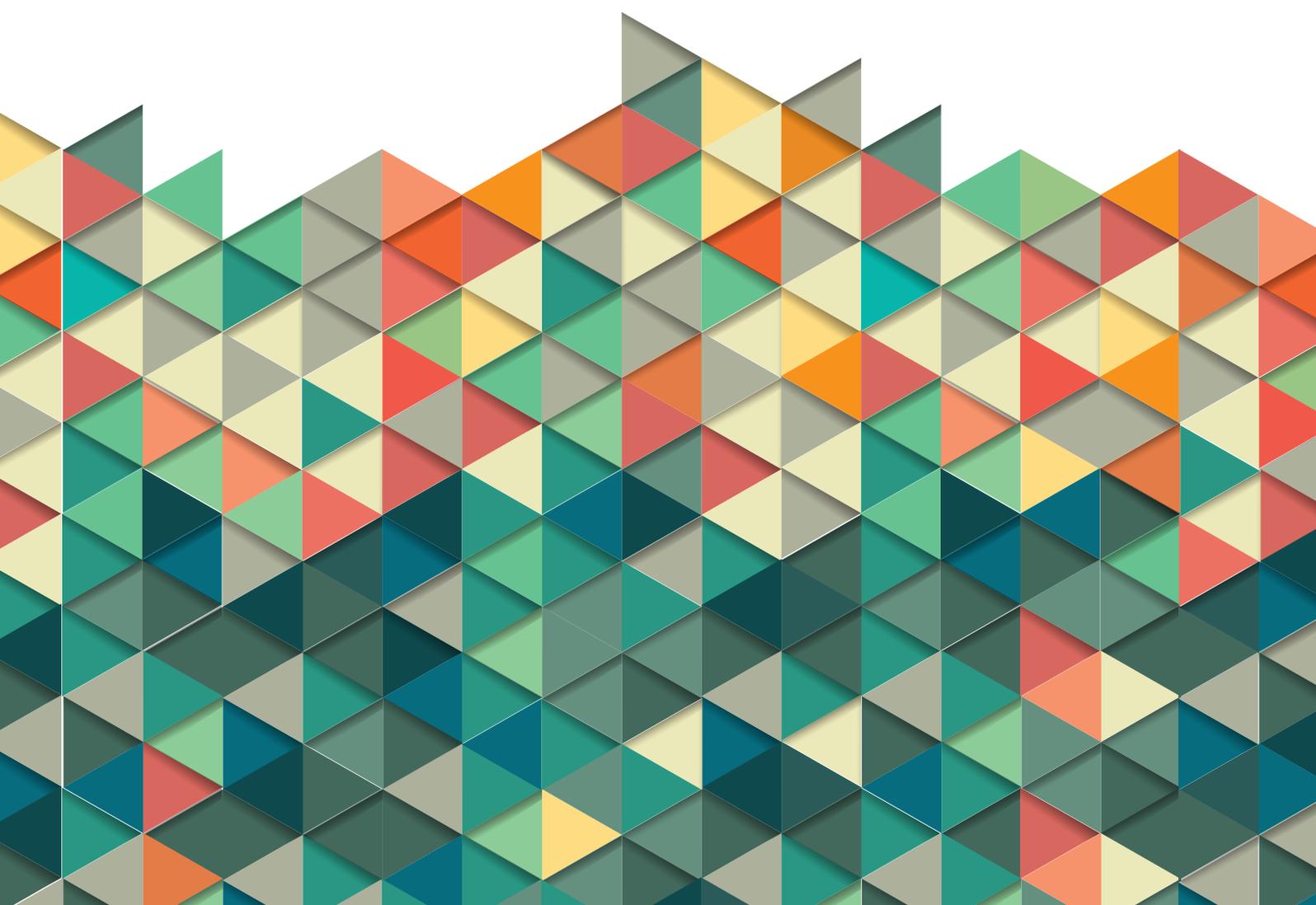


Developmental evaluation of results-based management at UNFPA



Brief

UNFPA Evaluation Office

2019



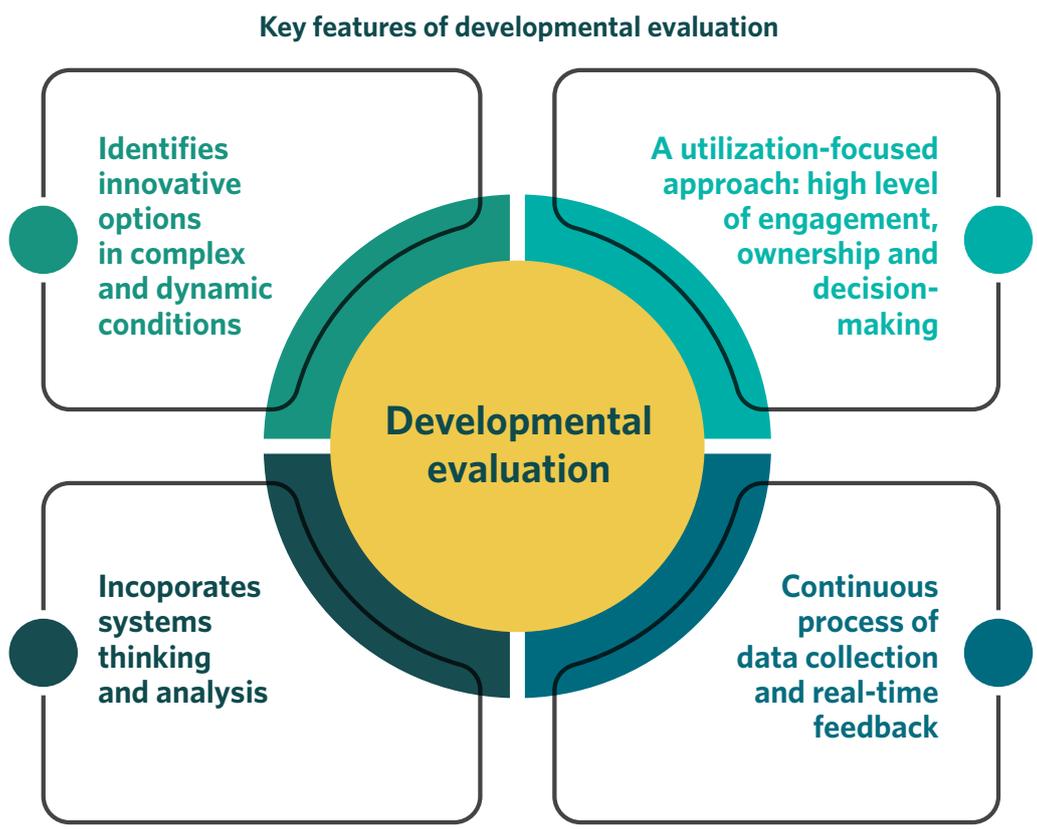
The primary purpose of this developmental evaluation of results-based management (RBM) at UNFPA was to provide useful evaluative input for decision-making in order to develop the next stage of RBM. This evaluative input included two main streams: identifying and analyzing the root causes of persistent issues in RBM; and bringing evidence for solutions, possible scenarios, and courses of action in the area of RBM. The evaluation put in place a data-driven evaluative process that has informed the analytical framing and decision-making process associated with organizational efforts to bring RBM to a new stage of development. The evaluation has provided initial input to the organizational development process required to advance UNFPA towards this new stage.

What is RBM?
 According to the United Nations Development Group RBM Handbook, RBM is a management strategy by which all actors on the ground, contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of development results, ensure that their processes, products, and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and goals).

Why developmental evaluation?

A developmental evaluation approach was fit for purpose to fast track RBM to the next level at UNFPA. It is forward-looking and utilization-focused, involving continuous real-

time feedback and high level of engagement within all levels of the organization. It provided evaluative input for decision-making and learning.



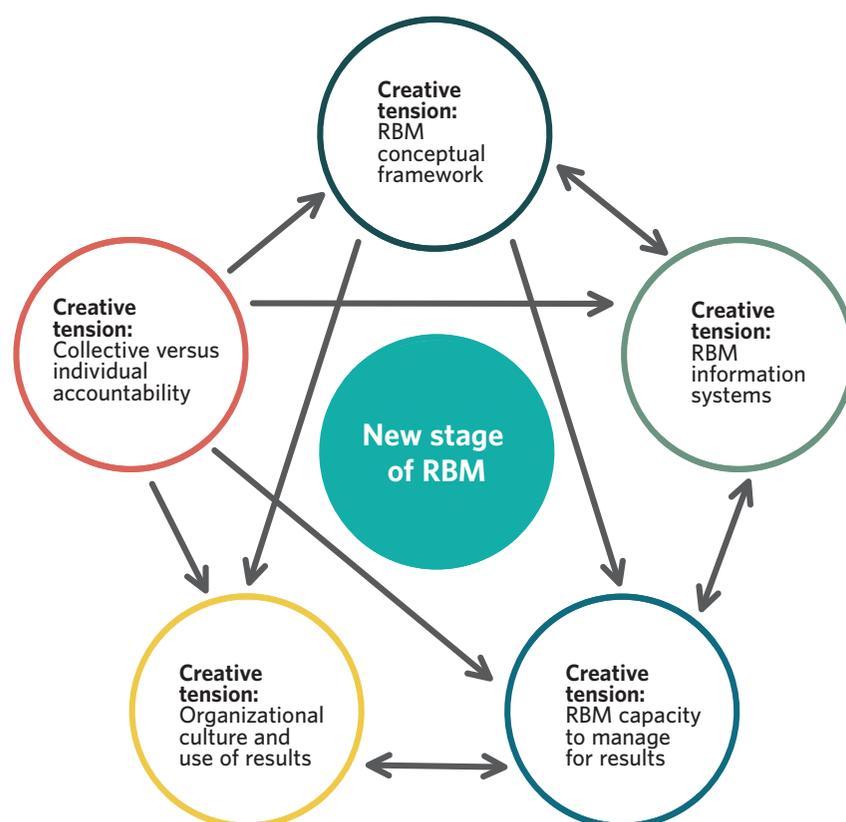
What is the RBM context at UNFPA?

Since the introduction of RBM at UNFPA in 2000, considerable strides have been made on developing formal systems, frameworks and tools to report on results at UNFPA. However, challenges remain in using results for adaptation and driving organizational learning.

What was the starting point and methodology for the evaluation?

The point of departure for the evaluation was an organizational situational analysis of the RBM system at UNFPA, which looked at issues, gaps, and bottlenecks. The systemic analysis is explained through a system of five interrelated creative tensions, which are five main areas where gaps and challenges prevent the current RBM system from optimizing its performance.

The five results-based management creative tensions map at UNFPA



A creative tension designates a gap between a desired goal or idea (the way it should be) and a current state of reality (the way it is). A creative tension always focuses on a gap that seeks to be resolved – that is why it is 'creative'. These five creative tensions are (1) varied understanding of the RBM conceptual framework by stakeholders; (2) unbalanced integration of United Nations system's collective accountability and accountability of UNFPA as an agency; (3) a limited culture of using results information for decision-making; (4) capacity constraints to manage for results; (5) and information systems not fulfilling current demands. The five creative tensions are all interrelated, influencing and affecting each other either directly or indirectly, thereby reflecting a systemic nature.

The evaluation departed from this systemic diagnosis to find out the root causes beneath the five creative tensions that prevent the RBM system from performing optimally. Evidence and findings from the evaluation were shared through feedback loops and presentations to UNFPA business units across the organization, leading to the joint identification and co-creation of the way forward reflected in a number of leverage points as possible solutions.

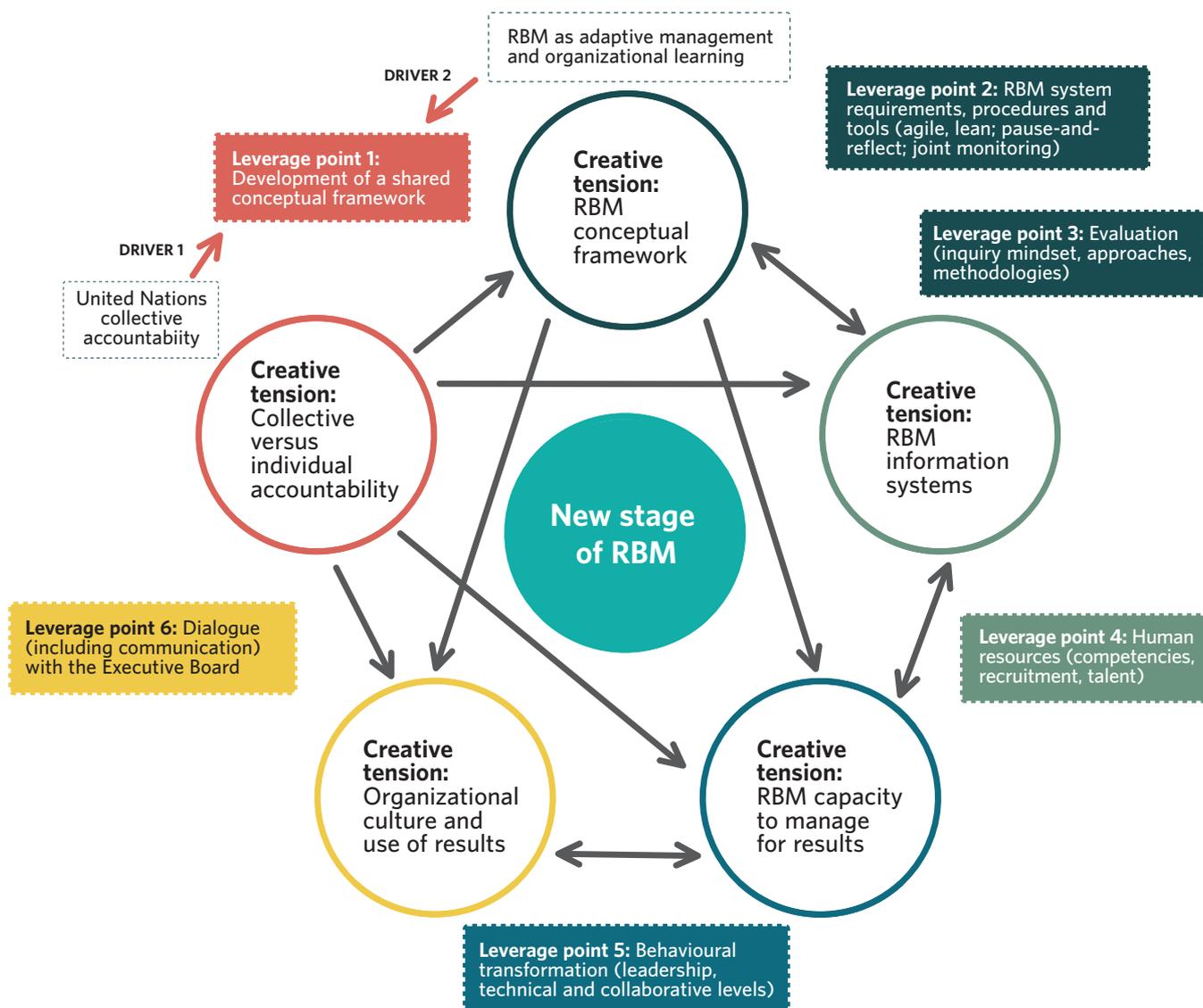
The way forward

Leverage points are areas of a system where small shifts can produce significant improvements in a system. Six leverage points linked to the five creative tensions

and their interrelationships have been identified during the developmental evaluation process to date: (1) the development of a shared conceptual framework for a clear, shared understanding of what the main purposes of RBM are and how to articulate them in practice in a new stage of RBM characterized by adapting programming and collective accountability; (2) revising current RBM system requirements, procedures and tools based on their purpose and value to the user and focusing on making reporting more efficient to free up time to pause-and-reflect; (3) evaluation function across UNFPA as well as evaluation as an inquiring technique embedded in programmes to increase the use of evaluations and development of an inquiring mind-set across the organization; (4) human resources focusing on staff competencies, recruitment strategies, and talent acquisition, which are proving essential to transitioning to the new stage of RBM; (5) behavioural transformation in terms of organizational ways of working, including team behaviour, leadership, practical RBM skills, and collaborative intelligence; and (6) a dialogue with the Executive Board around accountability for reporting, adaptation and learning; as well as the UNFPA value proposition and business model vis-à-vis how to capture and to measure such UNFPA value; and an in-depth discussion on current challenges in terms of availability of outcome data.

A number of possible actions that may be taken to start working on, and activate, the leverage points have also been identified.

The leverage flow: Identifying the change pathway



Next steps

The momentum generated by the developmental evaluation is an opportunity and also a risk. Managing expectations (inside and outside UNFPA) and capitalizing on the engagement generated with a quick response and clear actions, is critical for success in developing the next stage of RBM.

UNFPA Evaluation Office

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